

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

## POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING.

22i, SCOTT ELLIS GARDENS,  
ST. JOHN'S WOOD, N.8.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have just returned from a meeting of the "Town and Country Planning Association." Dr. Edith Summerskill, M.P., addressed the meeting, and her speech on post-war planning and reconstruction of housing was excellent.

I was alarmed to hear from the Chairman of the Association, however, that a certain section still favoured the tenement idea of housing, and while speaking to him privately afterwards, he urged me to do my best to make the District Nurses, Municipal Midwives and other welfare workers realise how greatly they could help the Association in abolishing this menace, by banding together and making a stand against the erection of any more tenements.

Having worked in the East End of London whilst doing my midwifery training, I cannot speak too strongly about the conditions of some of the tenements, and if Nurses are interested and realise how much they can help in the planning of the housing problem, will they communicate with the Association at 13, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

Yours faithfully,  
ANGELA RAVASIO, S.R.N., S.C.M.

## KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

"Let us Live to Make Men Free."

A Student Nurse writes: "Our Student Nurses' Association will, I feel sure, encourage our reasoning faculties in time, but, of course, with all we have to learn to pass exams. leaves very little time when our ward duties are at an end for further mental effort. Fortunately, we have a Sister Tutor in this hospital who encourages free expression of opinion, and you will be interested to know that we recently held a debate on the following inspiring statement by Hazlitt:

'The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves.'

"You know many women let the love of power get the upper hand, and in hospital work it reacts upon the character of subordinates in a very demoralising manner. It makes toads of the selfish.

"There were some lively passages of arms, but I came away from the meeting feeling a new woman.

"Julia Ward Howe's Battle Hymn brought down the house.

'As he died to make men holy; let us live to make men free,

'While God is marching on!'

[Wish we had been at this meeting. We feel sure it must have been an inspiration to those present.—ED.]

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## THE PRIZE COMPETITION.

We much regret no Paper of sufficient merit has been received for publication.

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION FOR FEBRUARY.

What are the Duties of the Industrial Nurse?

## THE MIDWIFE.

## THE QUEEN WELCOMES 1,000TH BABY AT FULMER CHASE MATERNITY HOSPITAL.

Mrs. Winston Churchill, on behalf of the Queen, recently handed over a layette to Mrs. Mark Lushington, the mother of the 1,000th baby to be born at Fulmer Chase Maternity Hospital for the wives of officers. The Queen sent her good wishes, and a packet of war savings certificates was presented from the Council of the hospital. The Matron and the Resident Medical Officer were also present.

As a further mark of the occasion the trustees of the Bernhard Baron Charities Trust have given £1,000 to form a "Baron Compassionate Fund," some of which will be used to cover grants made from the hospital funds to enable a certain number of patients to have free, or assisted, places at the hospital. Among the cases to be specially considered will be those whose husbands are either killed or missing.

Admission to the hospital, which has pre-natal and post-natal extensions, is mainly governed by the fact that the gross income of the family does not exceed £400 a year, but consideration is given to parents with other children or dependent relatives. The Duchess of Gloucester is president of the hospital and Mrs. Churchill its chairman.

We know of no work of greater value to officers—and to our country—than attending their wives with skill and care during childbirth, and all we hear of the work at Fulmer Chase Maternity Hospital is beyond praise.

## LACK OF MIDWIVES ENDANGERING MIDWIFERY SERVICES.

## Chief Nursing Officer's Appeal.

Miss Katherine C. Watt, C.B.E., R.R.C., Chief Nursing Officer and Principal Matron of the Ministry of Health, has sent a personal letter on the difficulty of staffing the midwifery services to the Matrons of over 80 Second Period Midwifery Training Schools where pupil midwives take their final examinations. She has asked them to make a special appeal to their pupils to continue in midwifery work after they have qualified in order to help to overcome the present shortage of midwives. Her letter states:—

"The shortage of practising midwives is now such that the efficiency of the midwifery services on which we have prided ourselves for so long, is seriously threatened, and I want to appeal to your pupils through you to help us to avert the danger.

"There are enough State-certified midwives throughout the country to fill the vacancies if a higher proportion would practise as midwives. The difficulty is that so many of those who qualify as midwives do not use that qualification but go into other spheres, often returning, if they are State Registered Nurses, to general nursing work.

"The shortage is general. We want more district nurse-midwives and domiciliary midwives, and, above all, we want more staff midwives for the hospitals and maternity homes.

"Some hospitals have had to close wards or close down altogether; others have been unable to open more beds for mothers because there are no midwives available to staff them; others still cannot accept all the applications for bookings or have no alternative but to send the mothers home much sooner than the principles of health should ordinarily allow.

"No other type of work is a more vital contribution to the national effort than the work of ensuring that the future generation will have the best possible start in the world."

We warmly endorse this appeal from the Chief Nursing Officer of the Ministry of Health. At the present time the professional skill of the certified midwife is of the utmost value to the community.

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